A

Catholicks Resolution,

Or, a Serious

ENQUIRY

Whether it be Better

To turn { *Independent,* / *Presbyterian,* / *Ranane?* } { Or continue / What I am, / *Catholick?* }

In Matter of

RELIGION?

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A

Catholicks Reflexion,

ELOQUENCY

RELIGION;

I. *Whether* Independent

OF all Religions I think I could make somewhat among *Them*; for what Learning I have, will help maintain their Ignorance, and my being a Proselyte, will promote their Confidence. It's probable I could frame as plausible a Discourse of the Reasons inducing me to be of that Persuasion, as some they have admitted: But before I joyn with them, I shall wait a resolution of the following Queries. And,

1. Whether I can easily joyn with such, as would Paganize and make Antichristian all the Churches of *Christ* in the whole world, except themselves?

2. Whether that be a false Church that converts their Members, before they come to be of their Party?

3. Or that which would propound a better way for Ministers maintenance, than God, who hath ordained, *That they that serve at the Altar, should live by the Altar?*

4. And that set up such to be Preachers, as have no art nor knowledg in the Tongues?

5. That make the whole essence of the Ministerial Call to consist in Election of the people, without *Ordination?*

6. That cry down Bishops, because they cannot preach to all their Flock at once, and yet themselves gather *Churches* from *York* to *London*, so that many do not see the face of their Pastor once in a year?

7. Whether under that Notion all Heresies have not crept into the Church?

8. Whether I shall joyn to that Party, who never yet could set bounds to themselves; but do still expect some new Discoveries for Modification? and whether my con-

ſent to that may not be more dangerous than the Oath of &c?

9. Whether I ſhall ſubmit to that Party, that hitherto neither the moſt Religious, the moſt Learned, nor the major part of any Nation ever yet ſubmitted to?

10. Whether the firſt and beſt of our Reformers ever thought of or practiſed ſuch a way?

11. Whether, were I now to die, I could take comfort in their Abſolution, ſeeing not one of them is authorized thereunto? And,

12. That would perſuade us that all our Martyrs for the Proteſtant Cauſe, did worſhip God in a wrong way, and therein condemn the Generation of the Juſt?

Could Anſwer be brought in to this Jury of Queſtions, That they are *Not guilty*, I could then better *believe* them, and *relieve* my ſelf: For the preſent, my Conſcience not being ſatisfied, I ſhall wiſh them Catholick Charity, and pray, That as they would ſhun the Rock of Superſtition on the one hand: they would likewiſe avoid the Shelve of Separation on the other: And O thou that alone art an *Independent* Being, teach all thine to *depend* upon thee, for counſel and direction, and not to deſpiſe the Churches Communion!

II. *Whether* Presbyterian?

IT is a *Thriving way*, and I am *poor*; the *tentation* therefore is ſtrong: but better enjoy *peace* of *Conſcience*, than the *ſpoils* of *violence*; I ſhall yet propoſe ſome *caſes of conſcience*, and upon their true *Reſolves*, I ſhall either ſhake hands with him, or continue what I am.

1. Whether I do not believe, That *Chriſt* taught his *Apoſtles* to pray, and ſay, *Our Father which art in heaven*?

2. Whether

2. Whether I do not believe, That the *Apoſtles* did pray, and ſay, as Chriſt taught them, *Our Father which art in heaven?*

3. Whether I have done well, to expunge and obliterate that *Prayer*, *Our Father which art in heaven?*

4. Whether I do not believe, That *Chriſt* ſent his *Apoſtles*, as his *Father* ſent *him? Joh.* 20. 21.

5. Whether I do not believe, That the *Father* ſent Chriſt to be the chief Biſhop of our *Souls? 1 Pet.* 2.25.

6. Whether I do not believe both theſe *miſſions* to be *jure divino?*

7. Whether I do not therefore believe, *Epiſcopacy* to be *jure Divino?*

8. Whether I do not believe Ἐπισκόπους, to be a different word from Πρεσβύτερους?

9. Whether I do not believe *Biſhop* to be the *name* of *office* and *dignity*, *Presbyter* to be a *name* of *order* and *duty?*

10. Whether I do not believe *Biſhops* are ſometimes called *Presbyters*, becauſe they were *Presbyters* before they were *Biſhops?*

11. Whether I do not believe *Presbyters* qua *Presbyters* are never called *Biſhops?*

12. Whether I do not believe that St. *Paul ſpake* and *did divinely*, when he conſtituted *Timothy* Biſhop of *Epheſus*, and *Titus* Biſhop of *Crete*, to overſee, and if need were to rebuke the *Presbyters* there?

13. Whether I do not believe St. *Jerome* ſpake *plauſly*, when he ſaid, *Niſi exors quædam & ab omnibus eminens poteſtas Epiſcopo ducetur, tot eſſent Schiſmata, quot Sacerdotes*; That unleſs an *extraordinary* and *peerleſs* preheminence were given to the *Biſhop*, there would be as many *Schiſms* as *Prieſts*.

14. Whether I do not believe King *James* ſpake *politick'ly*

Litely and *prudently*, when he said, No *Bishop*, no *King*?

15. Whether I do not believe the Primitive Church, and so the *Church successively* untill of very late years, one *century* and a half than an half, was governed by *Episcopacy*?

16. Whether therefore I do not believe I have done very *ill* to shoulder out *Episcopacy*, that I might get into his *Chair*?

17. Whether I do not believe that *Thebulis* and *Aërius* were therefore called *Heretecks*, because they would have had an *ecclesiastical parity*, *Bishop* and *Presbyter* all one?

18. Whether I do not believe, The Canons of the *Apostles* distinguished *the three degrees* of *Bishops*, *Presbyters* and *Deacons*, and gave the *superiority* to *Bishops*? *Can.* 4, 6, 7

19. Whether I do not believe *Thebulis* and *Aërius* did therefore phansie *an ecclesiastical parity*, because they could not be made *Bishops*, which they earnestly affected? *Epiphan. Heref.* 75.

20. Whether I do not believe the *Church of* Jerusalem was called a *Virgin Church*, and never corrupted, until by *Thebulis*, because he was not made a *Bishop*? *Eus. l.* 4 *c.* 22.

21. Whether I do not believe *Ignatius* lived in the Apostles days, and saw *Christ* in the flesh, and being yet a *Presbyter*, writ to the *Antiochians*, to remember *Evodius* their *Bishop*, who first from the *Apostles* received the *superiority* above the *Presbyters*, and after being *Bishop* himself, and going to suffer under *Trajan*, writ to the *Clergy* and *Presbyters* there, that they would be diligent in feeding their *flock*, until *God* did show unto them, Him that should rule over them after his death? And in another *Epistle ad Sard.* thus, *Presbyters* be obedient to your Bishops, *Deacons* be obedient to your *Presbyters*, *Laymen*

be

be obedient to all: And after all concludes thus: *My soul for theirs that observe this order, The Lord be with them.*

22. Whether I do not believe *Aerius* was the first that voted down all *Fasts*. *Vigilantius* the first that voted down all *Feasts* appointed by the Church: both *Heretickes*; and therefore whether I may not fear, I am something *Heretical* in following their *steps*?

23. Whether I do not believe, that S. *James* set out a *Lyturgie* or book of *Common Prayer*, for the Church in his time; St. *Basil* the like in his time; St. *Chrysostome* the like in his time; and so downwards untill Mr. *John Calvins* time?

24. Whether I do not believe, that Mr. *John Calvin* himself thought well of *Common Prayers*, and particularly of our *Common Prayer Book*, when he said, *Quod ad formam precum & rituum Ecclesiæ, valde probo, ut certa illa extet, & qua pastoribus in sua functione discedere non liceat*; Concerning the *Form* of *Prayer*, and *Ecclesiastical Rites*, I very well like, that there be a certain and constant one, from which the *Pastors* of the *Church* may in no wise depart or vary?

25. Whether I do not believe, That every word in the *Common Prayer Book* is in the *Bible*, either *literally* or *rationally* deduced thence. *v. g.* for the *Confession*. *Almighty God*, Gen. 17. 1. *And most merciful Father*, Exod. 34. 6. *We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep*, Psal. 119. 176. *we have followed too much the devises and desires of our own hearts*; Jer. 18. 12. *we have offended against thy holy laws*, Mat. 7. 8. *we have left undone those things which we ought to have done*, 1 Sam. 15. 24. *And we have done those things which we ought not to have done*, 1 Sam. 24. 5. 2 Sam. 12. 13. *And there is no health in us*, Psa. 38. 3. *But thou O Lord have mercy upon us miserable offenders*, Luke 18. 13. *Spare thou them O God which confess their faults*, Prov. 28. 13. *Restore*

thou them that be penitent, Ez. 18.31. *According to thy promise declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord*, Mat. 28. 18. *And grant O most merciful Father for his sake*, Joh. 16. 23. *That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life*, Titus 2. 12. *To the glory of thy holy name*, 1 Tim. 6. 16.

26. Whether I do not believe the *Absolution*, *Almighty God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, be grounded upon, John 20. 23.

27. Whether I do not believe the *Lords Prayer*, with the *Doxology*, *Thine is the Kingdom, Power and Glory*, is *verbatim* in Mat. 6 and without that *Doxology* in Luke 11.

28. Whether I do not believe, those *Versicles*, *O God make speed to save us*, be not in Psal. 102. 13. *Open thou my lips O Lord. And my mouth shall shew forth thy praise*, Psal. 51. 15.

I might be endless; to answer therefore some of your *Grand Objections*, I ask,

29. Whether I do not believe, *Remember not Lord our offenses, nor the offenses of our forefathers*, is a *sincere prayer* for the *living*, *and no sinful prayer* for the *dead*, *viz.* That God would not visit the *offenses* of our *forefathers* upon us their *children*, and grounded upon *Exo* 20. and *Ezek.* 18.

30. Whether I do not believe, *From sudden death good Lord deliver us*, is a *fervent ejaculation*, no *idle desire*, that God would not take us away unpreparedly, until we have made ready *our Accounts*?

31. Whether I do not believe, *For all them that travel by land or by water, all women labouring of child* &c. is a *charitable prayer*, and answerable to the Apostles command, *Do good to all*, Gal. 6. 10. *Pray for all men* 1 Tim 2. 3.

32. Whether I do not believe, *By thy holy Nativity &c Circumcision, by thy Agony and bloody sweat* &c. is *obsecrative*, and the sign of our *Faith*, not *affirmative* and the

sign

ſign of an *Oath*, deſiring *God* by theſe effectual means of the *Actions* and *Paſſions* of *Jeſus Chriſt*, to deliver us from thoſe *puniſhments* which are due unto us for our ſins.

33. Whether I do not believe, the firſt *prayer* in the *Office* of *Matrimony*, *That God would bleſſe this couple*, as *Iſaac* and *Rebecca*, proceeded rather from the holy Ghoſts *inſpiration*, than from *humane invention*; becauſe if from man onely, he would have gone upon *reaſon*, and made the prayer thus, bleſſe them as *Abraham* and *Sarah*, or bleſſe them as *Jacob* and *Rachel*; for *Abraham* was Gods firſt *friend*, *Jacob* was Gods great *friend*; yet neither ſo, nor ſo, but as *Iſaac* and *Rebecca*; becauſe *Abraham* had his *Hagar*, one *Concubine*; *Jacob* had his *Zilkah* and his *Bilkah* two at leaſt, *Iſaac* never any but his *Rebecca*?

34. Whether I do not believe, That that *prayer*, *Prevent us O Lord in all our doings*, &c. be not abſolutely againſt thoſe *great points of Popery*, concerning works of *preoperation* and *cooperation*, grounded upon that of St. *Paul*, *Eph.* 2. 8. and ſo no kin to the *Maſs Book*?

34. VVhether I do not believe the *Creed of the Apoſtles* is every word in the Scripture, *viz. I believe*, Mark 9 24. *in God* John 14 1. *the Father*, 1 Cor. 1. 3. *Almighty*, Gen. 17. 1. *maker of heaven and earth*, Gen. 1. 1. *and in Jeſus Chriſt his only Son our Lord*, Rom. 1. 3. *which was conceived by the holy Ghoſt, and born of the Virgin* Mary, Luke 1. 35. *ſuffered under* Pontius Pilate, John 19. 1. *was Crucified* John 19. 18. *Dead* John 19. 30. *and Buried*, John 19. 42. *He deſcended into Hell*, Act 2. 27. *the third day he roſe again from the dead*, 1 Cor. 15. 4. *He aſcended into Heaven, and ſitteth at the right-hand of God*, Mar. 10. 19. *From thence he ſhall come to judge the quick and the dead.* Act 10. 42. *And in the holy Ghoſt*, Mat. 28. 19. *The holy Catholick Church the communion of Saints*, Epheſ. 5. 27. *the forgiveneſs of ſins*,

Col. 1, 14. *The Reſurrection of the Body*, 1 Cor. 15. 35. *and life everlaſting*, John 10. 28.

36. VVhether I do believe the Feaſts of *Chriſtmaſs*, *Eaſter* and *whitſuntide* have been obſerved by the *pureſt* and *Primitive Churches*, and commanded upon us to obſerve the ſame? *Clem. ep. decret*, *Teleſph. p.* 117. *Cyprian. de Nativ. Chriſti*, *Nazian. Orat.* 38. *Chryſoſt. hom. in Nativ. Chriſti. The Church of Helvetias confeſs*, *c.* 24. *The Church of Bohemia*, *c.* 15. *The Church of Bremen*, *Regiſt.* 2. *fine*; *the Church of Auſpurge confeſſ. art.* 4.

37. Whether I do not believe, The Lord be with thee; and with thy *Spirit*, *equivalent* to Ruth. 2. 4.

38. Whether *I* do not believe St. *Paul* ſpake *Scripture*, when he ſaid, and bid us pray with the *ſpirit* and with the *underſtanding*, and whether *I* do not ſometimes pray without the *underſtanding*, when *I* think *I* pray by the *ſpirit*.

39. VVhether *I* do not believe, That therefore I have done very ill to excommunicate the *Engliſh Common Prayer Book*, which by moſt *Divines* hath been called *optimum Breviarium*, and ſo inſtead of it, have ſet up a *Directory*, which ſpeaks nothing ſo much, as the *ſixth ſence*, and hath no better Derivation than from the *Directarii*? But *I* am in earneſt, and earneſtly deſire of *Almighty God*, that if the *Presbyterian* be determined to go on in his *opinion*; yet that we may joyn together in all *Chriſtian affection*, and ſo meet in heaven, in everlaſting *Union*; for till I am convinced upon the former *Queries*, *I* am reſolved never to be of their *communion* upon *earth*; though *I* wiſh them increaſe of *ſanctity*, while they live; and eternity of *happineſſe* when they dye, through *Jeſus Chriſt*, Amen.

III.

III. *Whether* Romane?

I Am as far from *Rome*, as *I* am from *Geneva*; yet finding the *Romane* poſſeſt with more of the *water*, & the *Presbyterian* with more of the *fire*, *I* hope ſome moderation may in time cement *England* and *Rome* into the *Catholick*, ſo ſtrongly, as never hereafter to be diſſolved, or melted by the fury of zeal: You and you only *I* confeſſe have the *face* of a Church, and *I* hope you will not deny us the *Form*, and *Being* of a *Church*; ſince *I* believe there is ſo much ingenuity and wiſdom in you, as to diſtinguiſh betwixt a *Church extinguiſhed* and *eclipſed* or *perſecuted*: The Church of *England I* acknowledge is under a cloud and *eclipſed*, but the *Candle* is not quite out and *extinguiſhed*: Whereſoever two or three (of the *Catholick Church*) are gathered together, there is *Chriſt* in the midſt of them, ſo was his promiſe *Matt.* 18.20. And whereſoever a lawful *Prieſt* or *Paſtour* of the *Engliſh Church* is with *two* or *three* of his Congregation, *I* will not, *I* dare not doubt of the performance. *If* you have leſſe *charity*, either in the taking or miſtaking of it, *I* ſhall propoſe ſome few *Queries* in my own *name*, as one of you, though *I* thank God *I* am none of you, nor ever intend to be in opinion, howſoever in affection, becauſe you are my next *neighbour*; *I* therefore love you as my ſelf.

1. Whether *I* do believe Romane and Catholick are *Termini convertibiles*?

2. Whether *I* do believe, *I* may be ſaved, if *I pray* as the *Catholick Church* doth, and was taught by Chriſt, *Our father which art in heaven*; though I do not pray, as the Roman Church doth, and teacheth, *O thou mother of God*, St. *Peter*, St. *Paul pray for me*?

3. Whether if I do believe as the Primitive and Catholick Church did and doth, and hath taught the *Apostles Creed*, though *I* do not believe as the Roman Church doth, the Creed of the Councel of *Trent*, I may be sav'd?

4. VVhether if *I* endeavour to live after Gods Commandments, and obey him, though I do not endeavour to live after my superiors command, *I* may be saved?

5. Whether if I receive the *Sacrament* of the *Eucharist* as Christ Instituted and Commanded me to receive it, in both kinds, *Bread* and *Wine*, *Flesh* and *Blood*, though I do not receive it as the Church of *Rome* hath abrogated it, and Commanded to receive, in one *kind* only, I may be saved?

6. Whether my conscience can be satisfied by the device of concomitants that the *Blood* is given in the *Body*, since in the *Eucharist* the *Blood* is to be given as shed, not kept, as poured out, not contained in the Body?

7. Whether if *I* be born again, and made a *Christian* by true *Baptism*, and afterward confirmed by a true *Bishop*, though I am not annointed with oyl, I may be saved?

8. Whether if *I* believe the Scripture, and frame my life according, though I do not equally believe Tradition *I* may be saved?

9. VVhether if I serve and worship God in Spirit and in Truth, though I worship no images, nor God by images, I may be saved?

10. VVhether I may not be saved, if I believe in Gods mercies through Christs merits, though I put no confidence in merits of my own works?

These *Queries* with a very few more by moderate and, unbyassed men, might be brought to a reconciliation, and that they may be, *I* pray you let us joyn in one Prayer, till we joyn in all points.

O Moſt merciful God, who haſt made all Mankind of one; O moſt merciful God, who haſt contracted all the Elect of Mankind into one Body, thy Church; and haſt given the whole Church but one Soul, thy Spirit; and that Soul but one Life, thy Faith; and that Faith but one prop, one Goſpel, one Baptiſm, one Lords Supper; and this one Body and one Soul, but one Head, thy ſelf, who art but one Lord, and haſt again diſperſed this Body into ſeveral Aſſemblies and Societies, and haſt made each Society and Aſſembly but one; thereby intimating to us, that we ſhould all have but one Heart and one Mind; In mercy we beſeech thee look upon thy Church, and make her as thy Son did leave her, One; one in Opinion and one in affection, that ſhe may be no longer crucified betwixt Hereticks and Schiſmaticks, Thieves of thy Truth; betwixt profligates and hypocrites, thieves of thy Grace; betwixt Zelots and Superſtitious, thieves of thy Honor: but by virtue of thy Sons *Golgotha*, dry up *Akeldama*, and for the *merit* of *Calvary*, Deliver, O deliver her from all her preſent miſery; Relieve her from Force without, and Fury within, both againſt her; Reſcue her from civil Enemies, and crafty Children, both which fall upon her; Suffer not Reeds any longer to be thy Scepters, nor Chairs thy Throne, nor Tricks thy Order, nor Rudeneſs in one part, nor Superſtition in another part, thy Service; nor Miſcreants thy Worſhippers, nor Confuſion thy Religion, nor Wild-fire thy Zeal, nor Lunacies thy Reſolutions, nor Deviliſhneſs thy Spirit; but appear by her once more in thy own Spirit of Peace and Purity, of Sanctity and Sincerity, of Wiſdome and Sobriety, that all men may know thy Church by thy Livery, which thou didſt bequeath her, Love, Peace and Patience; and that thereby all men

may

may be guided by thy One Church, in the right way of Truth into Heaven, through *Jesus Christ* Amen. In whose blessed Name and words we further call upon thee, as he hath taught us in his Holy Gospel, saying;

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name; Thy Kingdome come, Thy will be done in Earth, as &c. Give us this day our daily bread, And forgive us our trespasses, as &c. And lead us not into Tentation, but &c. For thine is the Kingdom, Power and Glory, &c.

Or IV. *continue what I am,* Catholick?

I Desire so to continue, though I starve for it; For I have not took up this *Religion* upon *Tradition* or *Education*, but upon *Judgment* and *Deliberation*; And instead of *Queries* and *Cases of Conscience*, I offer to my self these *Irrefragable Propositions.*

1. If I pray aright according to the *Pattern* of *Devotion* sum'd up in the *Lords Prayer*, I shall be heard.

2. If I repent aright according to the *Prophets* and *Apostles Direction*, with the *Contrition* of *my Heart*, with the *Confession* of my *Lips*, and the *Endeavour* of my *Life*; I shall be forgiven. *Joel.* 2. 2 *Cor.* 7.

3. If I do right according to *Gods will* in his *Word*, sum'd up in his *Decalogue*, or Ten *Commandments*, though not *absolutely* and *exactly*, yet *uprightly* and *Evangelically*: I shall be accepted.

4. If I believe aright according to *Gods Gospel*, sum'd up in the *Apostles Creed*, without *doubting*, without *distrusting*, without *despairing*, I shall be saved.

5. If I receive *Christs* holy *Sacraments*, as he did *institute*,

tute, and *appoint* them, not onely as *Signs*, but *means* of *Grace*, not onely as *Assurances* of *Salvation*, but *Conveyances* of Sanctification, I shall be glorified.

And my *Religion* being so good, I desire not to change but to continue as I am; and for that I praise *Gods mercy*, and pray for *Gods blessing*.

My *Religion* is *good*, for it is *Gods*; my *Calling* is *Lawful*, for it is of God; my Service is honorable, for it is for God and my Savior; my message in which I am employed is *honourable*, for it is of Peace, and to be an Instrument of Reconciliation betwixt God and his People, and my proceeding in it, if it be as it ought to be, in Love, shall be acceptable; Joyfully I may do it, for God will reward it; Freely I may do it, for God will make it good; Boldly I may do it, for God will defend it; and incessantly I should do it, for first or last God will give a blessing to it.

But who, who is worthy to do this weighty business? not the best of men, how much more unworthy am I the worst of men and chief of Sinners? Truly of my self I am as unworthy as unable, and unworthy to be enabled, if thou enter in Judgment with me, That thou mayest not, I thus address my self to thy Throne of Grace.

Look upon me O my God in the face of Jesus Christ I beseech thee, and for his sake assist me with thy Spirit, That I may speak thy word, lest I be guilty of carelesnes; That I may not speak before I Learn, lest *I* be guilty of Rashness. That *I* may Learn and Speak, lest *I* be guilty of idleness; That *I* may not speak to the Ear, lest *I* be guilty of Flattery; That *I* may speak to the Heart, and so be a means of other mens salvation; and when *I* have preached

ched to others, That I may not be a Castaway my self; Sanctifie me with thy Spirit I beseech Thee, That I may aswell live as speak Divinity, Let thy Glory be my chief, Thy peoples and my own safety my next Aim, That I may not bring a wo to thy Flock, Give me Learning, that I may not bring wo to my self, Give me Diligence, that I may not bring Dishonor to thee, Give me Discretion; Deliver me from the misery of Starving thy Flock, for want of skill, Deliver me from the Cruelty of starving thy Flock, for want of will, Deliver me from a fruitless industry in feeding thy Flock, for want of Prudence, make me painful in my Study, powerful in my Pulpit, Fervent in my Piety, Holy in my Conversation, Successful in all; That I may be discharged of the Bloud of all those Souls Committed to my Charge: it is a precious People, for thou hast purchased them at a dear Rate, even with Bloud, with thy Bloud, with thy precious Bloud: Let them be precious too in my Esteem, That I may preach to them in Season and out of Season, not onely by Speaking well, but Living better: help their understandings in my knowledg of Divinity, better their Wills in my Practise of Divinity, Supply them and my self for this Life and the next out of thine own Fulness, and Crown my Labours with the Conversion of such Souls, as thou hast Ordained to Life Eternal, Through Jesus Christ: In whose most Blessed Name and Words, I further call upon Thee, as He hath Taught.

FINIS.